THE SEED SOWER.

VOL. II.

EDITED BY

JOSEPH WOOD.

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The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

EDITORS: JOSEPH WOOD and JAMES CROSSLEY.

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MONTHLY MEETING OF

PROTESTANT DISSENTING MINISTERS

OF WARWICKSHIRE AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES.

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Received of Rev. Geo. Eyre Evans *the sum of* —

Pound, Twelve *Shillings and* Six *Pence,*

subscription for the year 1894, as below.

John Harrison

Treasurer.

Membership, £ 2. 6

Special Fund, 10 0

12 6

So long my name she would not own,—
Ah! gladly would she now atone,
For we together make one moan:
She brought the mignonette I've sown.
Oh, the days I dote on yet,
Marjoram, pansies, mignonette.

H. A. PAGE.

covers but a small part of what is expected from us. After the negatives come the affirmatives. Real love of truth, real meekness and gentleness, real generosity, real high-mindedness, positive virtue, whatsoever things are true, nobly serious, just, pure, lovely, and of good report—these are Christian manhood. Religion does not consist in avoiding a round of evils. Men have

the most dismal notion of religion—that it is a perpetual giving up. It is a notion most dismally false. Religion is not giving up; it is all taking in—new life, new gain, new sweetness, new pleasure, new strength, new faculty and sensibility every day. The path of duty is indeed steep, difficult, and perilous; but it is a path where heaven's sunlight glows and flashes, where flowers of heavenly hue and fragrance bloom, where the glory brightens as you climb.

I. Christian manhood has a wide scope. This is the first thing I would impress on you. Christian manhood is marked by breadth and freedom—not by restriction and narrowness. There is nothing in art, nothing in history, nothing in science, nothing in literature, but Christianity gathers into its net and claims for use or adornment. It has been supposed that a man must be something less than a man to be a Christian. And the Church has too often, by its rules and requirements, dwarfed men, forbidding the use of reason beyond a certain point, putting a ban on honest investigation, clipping the wings of fancy and imagination, teaching asceticism and fear of the honest, simple pleasures of nature and life, as if men could not become Christians without first becoming "*pollards.*" When I was at Kew I saw a great number of tropical plants, strong and flourishing. I saw palms that, springing from the ground, had run up to the very glass. I climbed the winding stairs and found that as soon as the trees had reach a certain height they could go no further. Why? Because the conservatory must be preserved, and the trees had to be cut back lest they should break the glass roof. In order to secure the conservatory they were obliged to crop in the trees.

It has been very much so with churches. They let men grow according to the limits of the conservatory. But when a man has grown so tall that the glass is in danger they cut him in. Now Christianity does not exist for the sake of churches, but for the sake of manhood, and God's purpose is that men shall grow with a free soil and a free air to the uttermost limit, embracing "Whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, loving, lovable, and of good report."

The whole tendency of the Gospel is to inspire largeness of being, freedom of nature, independence of life, as fast as men can realise them, by broadening their powers and strengthening their virtues. Hence the new views which arise in the progress of civilization, in the development of scientific knowledge, in the refinement of society, in the advancement of liberty, are to be considered as neither outside Christianity nor antagonistic to it. If Christianity, instead of being a letter, a book, a church system, a set of doctrines, is manhood developed by the Divine Spirit to its farthest bound for the life that now is and the life that is to come, then everything belongs to Christianity that helps forward this glorious conception.

The Christian ought to hail the thinkers of every school who are making progress in the development of truth. Let men search for hidden records—for the footprints of God in the earth; let men make discoveries in the stellar depths; let men develop new economics and philosophies; let men open up other realms of knowledge. Let whatever is beautiful come to light. It does not follow that it has no place in religion because it is not a part of that which is conventional and orthodox. Nothing can escape the all-inclusiveness of St. Paul. "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy." The discoveries of Mr. Darwin; the philosophy of Herbert Spencer—these, too, are for Christian manhood. There is no antagonism between religion and science. Whatever elements go to make men deeper, wider, richer, higher; whatever enlarges man's horizon, whatever makes him a king worthy to be crowned—not by a material crown, but by the crown of intelligence and love—all that belongs to Christianity, according to Paul's idea of it. *Whatsoever things are true!* Find a broader word than that!

The fears of men with regard to new developments of life and thought are groundless. Men say, "If Mr. Darwin's doctrine of man is true then the 'Fall of Man' must go under!" I thank God that by the labours of Mr. Darwin and others the 'Fall of Man' has gone under. Men say, "If you develop criticism and science like this, where will religion be?" Well, if religion can be upset by developments of truth, so much the worse for religion. But nothing

can undermine Christianity if it means the growth of humanity, such a growth as shall lift men more and more above the animal, and awaken their higher instincts, and make the household more pure and beautiful, and the state grander and more powerful for peace, equity, and freedom.

Christianity is not to be thought of as a restriction, or as a narrowing of life and thought: it is largeness, liberty, aspiration. Christianity is not fearful. There have been ages of Christendom when fear has been the prevailing note of the church. How long did the ascetic spirit disfigure Christendom and mar its development? Some of us can remember the Evangelicism of thirty and forty years ago which feared nothing so much as free commerce with all the pleasant, beautiful things of art, literature, and human society. There was a time when our own Puritian forefathers were afraid of Shakespeare, afraid of the theatre, afraid of works of fiction, afraid of science, afraid of art, afraid of whist, dancing, and a hundred amusements which we now allow ourselves with an easy conscience. They called these things "the world," forgetting that there may be just as much worldliness in the conduct of a church meeting as in the walls of a theatre. Happily we have left all that behind us, and have come to see that everything fair, gracious, quickening; everything that calls out faculty and enlarges the vision; every fresh acquisition in the storehouse of memory; every finer perception, every more delicate touch, every broader view, is embraced in St. Paul's great "Whatsoever."

II. The second thing suggested by our text is the many-sidedness of the Christian life. Many graces are indispensable to the building-up of Christian manhood. There are many who set themselves to the acquisition of single excellencies to the neglect and almost ignoring of others. But the Christian character includes whatever things are true, honourable, just, pure, loving, virtuous, and praiseworthy.

How many men insist on single virtues. One man is honesty itself, and yet is not a pleasant companion to live with, since he has no graciousness, no courtesy, no forbearance. One person is frugal and economical, and in season and out of season preaches the gospel of thrift; but he is hard, without humility, without patriotism, without any love of truth, and his criticism of his fellow-men is on that point which is over against his virtue. For men's criticisms of each other are generally laudations of themselves. How many men are partial in their development? Who puts on the whole armour of God? One man has a helmet and no sword; another has a sword and no helmet. Or to change the figure. Going into a village at night, with the lights gleaming on each side of the street, in some houses the lights will be in the basement and nowhere else, and others in the attic and nowhere else, and in others in some middle chamber; but in no house will every window gleam from top to bottom. So it is with men's virtues. One shines here and another there, but how rare is a man whose soul is luminous throughout!

Yet to build up character altogether is easier than to build up any single quality. There is great advantage in the coherence of virtues. One virtue tends to find another and to help it. Virtues that grow out of the soil of the heart, and are not *stuck* in the ground like plants in a doll's garden, grow best in company. The good seed falling on good soil *tillers*, and there is not one stalk, but twenty. By taking hold of hands the virtues give momentum to each, and he that has humility finds it easy to be forgiving, and he who is forgiving learns patience, and patience teaches faith, and hope is always hard by faith, and he who has faith and hope has zeal. Single virtues are like ears of corn by the wayside, in great danger of being beaten down by the blast; but groups of virtues are like corn in a field—they hold each other up. "Whatsoever things," etc.

III. These words suggest the duty of controlling our thoughts. "Think on these things."

Whence do our thoughts come? We can control our actions, but are not our thoughts beyond our power? Are we indeed responsible for what we think?

What a wonderful thing is this world of thought! Did you ever sit in a wood on a summer's day, and looking up, see the light come flickering down in uncounted shades of green and gold and amber and brown, and these all the while changing and running one into another, with the rustling leaves and the

cloud-flecked sky? How useless to attempt to chronicle all this play and interplay of light and shade! Yet this would be simple and easy compared with the effort to note the number and variety of our thoughts for a single hour. If the flow of a day's mind were written it would fill a volume, and one's life a Bodleian library.

How is it possible to control this inward world? It seems often as if we could not help evil and degrading thoughts from coming into the mind. In the holiest moments, how will offensive or grotesque thoughts intrude themselves. How many seeming good men there are, who, if all their day's thoughts were to be suddenly developed into acts, visible to the eye, would run from themselves as men in earthquakes run from the fiery and sulphurous gapings of the ground. How piteous is the mental degradation of which we have again and again been guilty when walking or sitting alone, or during a sleepless night? Our thoughts have grovelled amid mean, petty things, or amid the mire of lust and passion. Why not insist that thought shall rise? Why not make an effort of strong purpose that "Whatsoever things are true, humble, just, pure, loving, and praiseworthy," we *will* think about?

For we can control our thoughts. I do not say we can always prevent the entrance of evil thoughts, but we can choose whether they shall stay in the mind or be driven out. A fiery brand may be thrown into this church from without, and that you could not help. But you can choose if it shall lie there and set the whole building ablaze, or whether you will seize it that very moment and cast it out. The evil thought can be cast out: how? By calling to mind good thoughts. A line of Wordsworth's, a passage of Milton's, a saying of Christ's, a trumpet-call from Carlyle, a noble deed of human endeavour, a word of earnest prayer, and the devil is expelled.

We can choose with what we will habitually occupy our thoughts. We can choose whether we will walk on the shady or the sunshiny side of the street; whether we will walk in the murky valleys or on the breezy hill-tops. We can choose what company we will keep. All moralists are agreed on the danger of bad company—the risk of living much with those who are vicious, or trivial, or mean, or proud. It is not only that bad companions may tempt us to actual wrong-doing, but that there is a damaging and deteriorating influence in the atmosphere they create, and in mere converse and contact with low morality. Few men rise much above the level of the society in which they live.

But that which the society of other men does for us, for good or for evil, is done scarcely less by that sort of association which is entirely within the precincts of the mind itself, the company of our own thoughts, the things with which reflection busies itself. The worst company many a man keeps is his own thoughts. If few men rise above the level of the society in which they live, no man rises above the level of his own thoughts.

Again, I aver, we can very largely control our thoughts. We can choose any morning whether we will gloat on the police-court news in our daily newspaper, or whether we will turn to things of great and national interest. We can choose whether we will feed on the mere garbage of literature, or on what is true, pure, lovely, bracing, beautiful, and healthy. We can choose whether we will join in conversation when it takes a low tone, or rebuke it by our departure. We are not so helpless as to be at the mercy of every evil suggestion in the air. We can direct our thoughts into right channels if we will. Things true, not words and deeds of falsehood; things nobly serious, not petty and trivial; things just and righteous, not such as rob God of His honour and man of his rights; things pure and chaste, not unclean and immoral; things lovely, not hateful; things of good report, not scandalous and disgraceful; these are the proper topics of a Christian's willing meditation. The great exploits and the great characters of history; the noble works and self-sacrifices of charity; the stirring interests of our country and our time; the great conceptions of poets; the delightful things of the true humorist; these are the things on which the mind ought to pasture. Where this is done there is little fear of evil thoughts.

Who does not remember that beautiful description given by Tennyson of his friend—

> Nor ever narrowness nor spite,
> Nor villain fancy flitting by,
> Drew in the expression of an eye
> Where God and nature met in light.

O! to have our thoughts free from narrowness, spite, and *villain-fancy*! O! to be king of this world, and control these legions—more numerous than the legions of Cæsar—our own thoughts! "Think on these things." It is not enough to cast out narrowness and villain fancies, we must fill their place with bright angelic guests, the thoughts pure and true, just and lovely, noble, and of good report.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward.

[AN INTERVIEW.]

Mrs. Ward, as a rule, steadily refuses to be interviewed, but out of sympathy for our paper and its readers she consented to make an exception. She has corrected and added to the original notes of the conversation.

"May I begin, Mrs. Ward, by asking if you were very much surprised at the success of *Robert Elsmere?*"

"Yes, on the whole I was. The great length of it was depressing both to me and to my publishers. Yet I could not help feeling that what had so greatly interested me might interest others. My first indication of what was coming came perhaps from a letter written me by a friend in the north, after reading the first volume, some weeks before the book was published. The warmth of his verdict astonished and cheered me. Then three weeks after the book appeared it surprised me to find a gentleman in Liverpool, who had already walked over the Surrey sites described in it. And at six or seven weeks the rush for it began. It was already in its fourth edition before Mr. Gladstone's article appeared. At the time, however, it was difficult for me to take much pleasure in the book's popularity. The *Times* review was put into my hands the very day of my mother's death. About July the great success of the book in America may be said to have begun, and that, certainly for a few months, was an extraordinary experience. Of late years what has particularly pleased me has been to see the book read and liked by many persons abroad, whose names one had learnt to honour in one's young days at Oxford. That men like Mommsen and Curtius should delight in it, and that M. Taine should express to me his great pleasure in a book which had 'treated one of the two leading problems of our day, the gradual transformation of Christianity,' without, as he was kind enough to think, sacrificing 'truth and human interest' to the personal opinion of the writer—was to me, as it would be to anybody, a great stimulus and reward."

"It is commonly said that a number of characters in *Robert Elsmere* are portraits."

"That is only true of 'Grey,' in whom I tried to record some aspects of Professor T. H. Green, of Oxford. But no one can be more conscious than I how little my sketch has been able to seize of the reality of a great man."

"Does the movement described in 'Robert Elsmere's' spiritual history represent, in your judgment, anything that is going on in the Church of England now?"

"No doubt the movement of to-day is somewhat different, although it would not be difficult to point perhaps to many instances of clergymen whose change of position has been caused much in the same way. But the influence of the critical leaven becomes more complex and widespread every year—especially in the High Church party. The movement of thought in that direction is astonishing. Look at the attempt to accommodate old beliefs to new light in *Lux Mundi*—a very unsatisfactory attempt I venture to think, but one that shows the pressure of new knowledge. Again, what a sign of the times it is that the New Theological Translation Library, issued by Williams and Norgate, the first volume of which is Weizsäcker's *Apostolic Age*, should be edited by Canon Cheyne! It is curious that while the Broad Church party has disappeared—the school of Stanley and Kingsley—the old High Church appeal to history should be working out in this way. But a large section of the clergy are yet untouched."

"Has the growing power of biblical criticism in any way touched High Church doctrine?"

"My impression is that so far it has mainly affected the *feeling* of orthodox people towards those who differ from them,—in spite of the proceedings going on just now in the London School Board. The new light thrown on the New Testament has quickened the sense of reality with regard to the central figure of

Christianity among all schools of thought. Anglican belief may seem for the moment to profit. But what is really growing unseen is a sense of the cogency of the case on the other side, and of the complexity of the historical problem—leading in many cases certainly to a greater tolerance and sympathy towards opponents."

"What were the influences that moved you in the direction of liberal theology?"

MRS. HUMPHREY WARD.

"Chiefly a long apprenticeship to German work in connection with a special field of historical investigation. It was in connection with early Spanish Christianity, where, in addition to what the Germans call the "sources," two classes of books offered themselves, one representing a German critical school, the other a Catholic school, both Spanish and German. In that comparatively neutral field one saw clearly the effect of dogmatic pre-conceptions on the historic instinct and power.

"Do you consider your uncle Matthew Arnold's books are still a factor in the liberal movement?"

"*Literature and Dogma* most certainly is. Its influence has been very wide-spread."

"To turn from theology to literature. Some of your admirers have felt pained, almost shocked, by some of the scenes in *David Grieve*, particularly by the pictures of Bohemian life in Paris. The Young Person has indeed been forbidden to read *David Grieve*."

"Yes, I know—and it is never pleasant to find old friends condemning you! But I had to show in the third volume what faithfulness could make of marriage even in its least

promising forms, and to that end the contrast of the second volume was vitally necessary. At any rate the two were conceived together. In my belief the modern novel must and should claim a great freedom of subject. The problem of the English novel seems to me to be to vindicate this freedom for ends at once æsthetic and moral, while rejecting many of the French methods of *treatment*."

"You have a new novel in the press?"

"Yes; I hope it will be out by April."

"Will it be a novel with a purpose?"

"I should not myself give it that label at all! It is a story of English country life, and of life among the London poor, called out by the perpetual debate of our time—the relation of poverty to wealth, and the social burden on the individual conscience. It does not attempt a solution; it offers a picture.

"You have spoken of your uncle, Matthew Arnold. Do you agree with what he said about the 'sterility' of Unitarianism?"

"That is a question I think I must not answer just now. You know my letters to the *Manchester Guardian*, on the Oxford meetings, have given some offence, and I have felt with a good deal of pain what comes of plain speaking. The commotion caused by those letters has made it incumbent on me to try and work out some thoughts on the subject generally. The result I hope to embody in my Essex Hall lecture, to be given in the course of the summer. I should like to ask in it what we, who are not born Unitarians, may hope for from Unitarianism?"

"And what of the Elsmere settlement at University Hall?"

"The working of University Hall has been a constant source of interest and new knowledge to me. On the whole I believe it has done quite as well as we could have hoped, and we are just on the eve of a forward move. We are now much cramped in social work by the smallness of the rooms at Marchmont Hall. Our audiences have quite outgrown them, and we hope to begin very soon the building of a new concert and lecture hall, classrooms and a gymnasium. But the difficulty is to find a site near enough to our old friends. We are at present drawn to one in Somers Town which offers many advantages. From £4000 to £6000 will be wanted to carry out our scheme, and if any of your readers can help us I need not say we should be most grateful. We have eleven residents in the Hall at present, and are constantly adding to our outside workers."

"Do you consider the educational work of University Hall satisfactory?"

"I do not think we could have expected a better result in the time. For subjects of pure biblical criticism we get audiences varying from 30 to 50, and much of the work done—especially for Mr. Wicksteed's Old Testament lectures on Sunday—is often very good. Last term 60 tickets were sold for Mr. Addis's lectures on the "Christology of the New Testament," and in Economical and Social subjects Mr. Wicksteed's teaching power has gained him a real hold over his classes. I should add that whenever Dr. Martineau has lectured for us the attendance has risen to the utmost limit that the room in Dr. Williams' Library can hold, and the same has been the case with Mr. Stopford Brooke. Taken as a whole the "Settlement" is still in the day of small things, but its possibilities are large and growing, and ought, I think, to call out the sympathies of all those who care to help forward the growth of a simpler and truer Christianity, whether among rich or poor."

A Storm Song.

Chasten the land, O wind,
Hurl autumn from his throne,
Be pitiless, be blind,
And let the forest groan;
The forest's quickened life
Will bless thee yet; for thou
Art God's keen pruning-knife
That lops each withered bough.

Chasten the land, O war,
Consume the false and frail
With fire of thy red star,
And let the nation wail;
Redeemed by sore distress
From rottenness of soul,
'T will live some day to bless
The storm that made it whole.

ALFRED HAYES.

Our Toilers and Moilers.

II.

THE CARPET WEAVERS OF KIDDERMINSTER.

Thomas Dugdale, the old antiquarian, describes Kidderminster as "A large and populous Market and Corporation town, having a separate jurisdiction, but locally situated in the lower division of the hundred of Half-shire. . . Members were returned to Parliament for this place in the reign of Edward I., but the privilege was lost by disuse, till the passing of the Reform Bill, and now sends one member." According to the same authority, "Kidderminster was noted, in the reign of Henry VIII., for the manufacture of broad-cloth, afterwards for that of linsey-woolsey, and more recently for the making of crapes, bombazines, and poplins. In 1735, the manufacture of Scotch carpeting was introduced, and subsequently that of cut carpets was established, which sort of goods having been invented here, has obtained the distinction of Kidderminster carpets. Brussels carpets are likewise made here in a style of excellence highly creditable to the skill and taste of the Kidderminster manufacturers, whose productions are said to be unrivalled for elegance of design, and permanence and brilliancy of colour."

Such is the testimony of old Thomas Dugdale to the condition of the town and its industries in days gone by. To-day, however, things are somewhat changed. There is now but one industry in the town, and unfortunately one only. Kidderminster has nothing of great or little importance except carpet weaving, which, when it is in low water, brings everything else down to the same condition. For the last three or four years affairs have been steadily going from bad to worse. But I must not enter upon grievances at once, so will turn back and start at the beginning.

It may seem strange to many when they are informed that the Kidderminster carpet is not now made at Kidderminster; at any rate, only by one firm out of about forty in the town. It is made chiefly in Scotland, and is very similar to Scotch carpets in the principle of working. It is called an ingrained carpet, that is, the colours run right through from front to back, and are worked by a large number of shuttles, each shuttle carrying a different colour; whilst in the case of Brussels weaving the colours are selected by a Jacquard machine, and the shuttle carries no yarn, only the cord which binds the yarns together and forms a corded back-ground to the carpet. These are the two main 'principles' in carpet-weaving. Besides the above-mentioned carpets—Kidderminster and Brussels—there are also manufactured here the following kinds:—Tapestry carpets, Wilton, Axminster, Indian Art carpets, Dutch and Turkey. There is, however, very little Tapestry weaving done here now. That, also, is confined to one firm, and is different in principle from any other kind of weaving, the pattern being painted with brushes on the yarn when tightly wound round big drums. It is a cheap and poor kind of carpet, and is now made chiefly in Yorkshire. The Axminster carpet is considered the most luxurious, and is very costly compared with others, although it is made chiefly by women (who work for less than men), as the machinery is lighter than that used for Brussels and Wilton. Wilton is considered the most durable, especially when it is a good thick deep pile. Wilton pile is nothing but a Brussels carpet with the loops cut through. Everyone knows the nature of a Brussels. The yarn is made into parallel rows of loops which are formed by wrapping the yarn round what look like rows of thick knitting needles. All these needles have at one end a sharp little knife, and when they are drawn away the knives cut open every loop of yarn, and so Wilton is made. In the making of Brussels the process is exactly the same except that the needles have no knives at their ends, and when drawn out the loops remain whole.

For the manufacture of carpets there is a similar division of labour, as there is in every other machine industry, such, for instance, as, first, wool-shakers, or winnowers (shaking the dust out); wool-sorters (dividing it into its various qualities); wool-carders (who prepare it for spinning into yarn); then come the spinners; the dyers (who colour the yarn already made into skeins). Then follows the winding from skeins on to bobbins, which are used by the weavers in their work. After the carpet leaves the weavers' hands, it is "dressed," or finished by women, who strain their eyesight in looking

out for slightest flaws, which flaws they make good with their needles—making loops in Brussels carpet, for instance, with their needles, which should have been done at the loom. Then, after it is thus dressed, the carpet is next sheared—all the fluff sheared off the surface of the carpet with very sharp knives. Then it is measured (by machinery), packed, and sent away. The above is the main line of process. But, of course, there are 'side-lines,' so to speak. There are, at least, four other most important branches connected with the trade, which are as essential as all the above-mentioned. There is first the designer, who designs the patterns for the carpets, and whose work is purely artistic. Like many a minister, he has to rack his brain for 'subjects,' and the imagination is called into play very largely. He is for ever on the look-out to see whether he can turn anything to good account. Designing is a very difficult profession. When the masters pass a design and adopt it, it is then handed on to the 'stamper,' who stamps or punches holes into cards, which cards, when finished and strung together, are placed on the Jacquard portion of the loom, and bring out the design on the carpet woven. One design may be produced in five or six different sets of colours, and the work of choosing these colours is a distinct and separate work, and is done by what is called the colour-foreman. He has to know the tastes of various countries, for although the same design might suit almost every country, the same colours would by no means be similarly appreciated. The colour-foreman sees to all that. Then, lastly, comes the 'tuner,' who has to understand every detail of the intricate machinery, for when it goes wrong he is the doctor who puts it in 'tune' again. His is a very responsible position, and much depends upon his skill and ingenuity, as looms break down frequently, and when eight or nine are standing still, needing the skill of the doctor, much depends upon the skill and speed of that doctor, both to men as well as to masters. So much then for the industry in itself.

I have said that trade is in extremely low water here, and has been for some time; and masters and men were at first inclined to blame each other, but in talking to representatives of each class, and asking them to give me their unbiassed opinions upon the present condition of things, the men, on their part, have admitted that their Weavers' Association (which is worth £11,000 now, and was founded in 1866), has made two or three serious mistakes in the past, such, *e.g.*, as the driving away of the tapestry-weaving, and also glutting the market with outside labour, by refusing the town young men, under twenty-one years of age, permission to take charge of a loom. But one of the masters told me he thought these were comparatively small and insignificant causes. The depression is so universal that the position of affairs would be very similar if the weavers had made no mistakes in the past, and he thought the Association, on the whole, had done much more good than harm The chief causes of the present depression are, first, the fact that carpets are a luxury, and when there is universal depression people deny themselves luxuries. Then, those very countries which used to be Kidderminster's best customers are making their own carpets, and are becoming its competitors. Banking difficulties in Australia, the silver question in the United States and in India, the hostile tariffs of most countries, the troubles in Argentina and other South American countries, all of which were big customers of this town, have each and all tended to bring about the present sad state of things. There are scores of weavers out of work through no fault of their own, and who are, therefore, in receipt of 7/- a week from their Association; and these "out-of-works" are better off with their 7/- than many of the weavers who have the *name* of work. Often and often they take home as their week's wages between 5/- and 6/-. And this is how the wages of one week were spent recently. Income, 5/6. Expenditure—Butter, 1/3; tea, 5½d.; sugar, 6d.; biscuits, 2d. (not luxuries, but for eating on way to work at 6 o'clock in the morning); candles, 2½d.; soap, 1d.; Bread, 1/8; dinner, 5½d. (because no time for leaving work); hair-cutting, 2d.; bacon, etc., 6½d. Number in family, four. Neither meat, coal, rent, nor clothing could be afforded that week; the man a steady, honest fellow, and only too glad to work when work is to be had; the wife, thrifty and ready to help in any way she can. And these are by no means the worst cases. Families are repeatedly known to be destitute of money, and

without fire and bread in the house. The unemployed dyers and labourers are worse off than the weavers, as they have not a powerful Association at their backs. But this is enough of a gloomy subject.

It will be more interesting to turn to another aspect of our paper, viz., the decided improvement in the life of the present carpet-weaver,—when he can get something more than the mere starvation fare above referred to,—compared with the life of the old hand-loom weavers of fifty or sixty years ago. These old handloom weavers were employed intermittently just as they are now, but they had no fixed hours of labour. Being their own masters, and doing all their weaving at home up in the garrets, they spent the first half of the week at the public-house, bowling, playing cards, cock-fighting, dog-fighting, man or prize-fighting. Stone-throwing was another favourite pastime of the old weavers. Then at the latter end of the week he would work his own wife and children, or, if he had none, his apprentices till twelve o'clock at night, and have them up at two, three, or four o'clock the following morning, so that the pieces should be finished on Saturday. Very often work had to be continued all through the night for that purpose. Then the apprentices or assistants suffered by the fact that the weaver often forgot to pay them their wages. The public-houses were open all night and all day, and there was no Reading Room, or Coffee Tavern, or Free Library, or Workmen's Club; very few newspapers, and fewer still who could read them. The paper chiefly read on Sundays at the public-houses was *Bell's Life*, a sporting paper devoted to the prize ring. Although a weaver could earn good wages in those days, yet it was rare to see him well clothed, and his daily fare consisted of bread, bacon, potatoes, herrings, oatmeal, and vegetables —rarely fresh meat He could weave at the rate of three-quarters of a yard per hour, but to-day a good weaver can, by the help of the power-loom, add five or six more yards to that. Besides, the present day weaver is a different being altogether from his representative of half-a-century ago. He is to day a trained and disciplined man, with far more refined tastes, indeed many having a distinct bent and taste for English literature, including our old Classics. His hours of work are fewer in number and more regular. His physical and moral strength is not wasted as of old. He has acquired habits of self-restraint and self-respect, of which most of his forefathers were innocent. He is now a citizen to be depended upon, and as a rule he is thrifty. The factory life here, on the whole, has been a beneficial one to the men in the creation of regular and respectable habits; and the handling of complicated machinery has sharpened the intellect and made them more quick-witted. The chief drawback is apparently due to the introduction of female labour. Homes are broken up through the fact of every member entering the factory mothers as well as daughters, and there is little home life in consequence. In certain kinds of weaving women alone are employed, as in the case of Axminster carpets, and they were first employed permanently, as weavers, when the different kinds of Axminster looms were brought into the town, and when labour happened to be very scarce at the same time. The result to-day is that women are often the chief bread-winners of the family, earning 20s. and 25s. a week, when their husbands and brothers earn from 5s. to 10s. a week. One consequence of this is that when a daughter does fairly well she often moves out from the home and goes into lodgings, and takes her earnings along with her.

Still, homes are decidedly better than in the good old days, in spite of present shortcomings. The conditions of work are better. Weavers have warm rooms to work in now, well lighted, and well ventilated, instead of the dark and dingy old garrets of days gone by. There is, however, plenty of room for improvement, plenty of need of re-adjustment, if one only knew how to set about it in the right way; but the re-adjustment which both masters and men would most devoutly wish to see is the old one, when the "trade" of Kidderminster was trodden under foot by all the world.

E. D. P. EVANS.

FAR away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I cannot reach them; but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.—*Louisa M. Alcott.*

Historic Notes on Midland Churches.

No. V. PART I.

CRADLEY; PARK LANE CHAPEL, FORMERLY PENSETT MEETING-HOUSE.

Ministers.

Josiah Basset	1707-1735
Joseph Fownes	1735-1748
Noah Jones	1748-1762
Joseph Baker	1762-1789
James Scott	1789-1827
Benjamin Carpenter	1807-1816
William Bowen	1828-1850
William Cochrane	1850-1885
James Crossley	1885-1891
Arthur Ellis O'Connor, B.D. ...	1891-1894

Historic Note.

PENSETT MEETING-HOUSE

The two men who were principally instrumental in founding the society of Protestant Dissenters at Cradley were, according to the Rev. Richard Witton, of West Bromwich (1735), the Rev. Henry Oasland, M.A., of Bewdley, and Rev. H. Hickman, "who resided at Birmingham," the son of the Rev. Henry Hickman, B.D., one of the ejected ministers, who lived for some time privately in Worcestershire, and was afterward minister of the English congregation at Leyden.

In 1704 the Rev. John Godley, of Walsall, purchased from John Mansel, of Netherend, a field called Pensett Meadow, in the parish of Kingswinford, Stafford, for the sum of £24, raised by voluntary contributions for the express purpose of erecting a place of worship. The building was completed in 1707, and together with the land, was conveyed to trustees; viz:—Revs. John Spilsbury, of Kidderminster, John Warren, of Coventry, George Flower, of Prestwood, J. Basset, of Birmingham, dissenting ministers; and J. Turton, of West Bromwich, ironmonger; H. Hunt, of Cradley, yeoman; N. Hancox, of Kingswinford, sythesmith; J. Homer, of Cradley, ironmonger; S. Forrest, of Cradley, ironmonger; W. Deely, of Cradley, carpenter; W. Parkes, of Kingswinford, yeoman; J. Bague, of Kingswinford, glass maker; J. Pearsall, of Halesowen, yeoman; W. Parkes, of Pedmore, ironmonger; and J. Coley, of Rowley Regis, ironmonger. The indenture specifies that four dissenting ministers should always constitute a part of the trust, that the choice of the pastor should be vested in the majority of the trustees with the approbation of two of the ministers, and if at any future time the building should not be permitted by the laws of the land to be used as a place of religious worship, the trustees shall dispose of the same to such charitable purposes as they may think most proper. The church being now formed, the place of worship completed, and the premises vested in trustees' hands, the Rev. Josiah Basset (born 1683), son of the Rev. Josiah Basset, ejected from Exhall, in Warwickshire (who died in 1695, when his boy was but 12 years old), was chosen minister and accepted the invitation. He was educated at the expense of Mr. Hickman, and first began to preach at Cradley in 1704. He was ordained by Mr. Flower, Mr. Spilsbury, Mr. Godley and other ministers in the neighbourhood in 1707. Soon after, he married Mrs. Allen, a lady "of excellent character and considerable property." He statedly resided at Birmingham and continued to officiate at Cradley for upwards of 30 years, though his salary never exceeded £20 per annum. The roads at that time were frequently impassable in the winter season. In 1715 when mobs destroyed many of the places of worship of the dissenters in this locality, Pensett Meeting-house was burnt down. The congregation, however, continued to assemble for public worship "at the Bower," and in 1716 a new building was erected on the site of that which was demolished, "partly at the expense of Government; £119 13s. 6d. was the sum granted, and more might have been obtained if applied for." Basset, whose place was well attended, and who was indefatigable in discharging the duties of his office, "was highly respected and much beloved by his people." He died in 1735, one Sunday evening after his return from Cradley, and was buried in S. Martin's Churchyard, Birmingham. A list is still extant of the seat-holders in Pensett Meeting-house in 1735, from which it appears that 230 sittings were occupied. During the vacancy between the death of Mr. Basset and the settlement of Mr. Fownes, the "congregation was supplied by Mr. Witton, of West Bromwich; Mr. Hancox, of

Dudley; Mr. Edge, of Stourbridge; Mr. Bussel, of Wolverhampton; Mr. Stokes, of Worcester; Mr. Cardale, of Evesham; Mr. Barret, probably a student; and Mr. Fownes, then a student at Findern."

The Rev. Joseph Fownes settled at Cradley as minister to the congregation on 20th June, 1736. He was ordained "to the full discharge of the pastoral office on 20th April, 1743, the gentlemen who assisted were Dr. Latham, his former tutor, and Messrs. Kenrick, Witton, Holland, Carpenter and Mattocks: all of them respectable ministers in that part of the Kingdom." Fownes removed in 1748 to the Shrewsbury congregation at the "particular solicitation" of the Rev. Job Orton, and it was with great reluctance that his friends at Cradley and at Stourbridge, where he usually resided, consented to part with him. During the period of his ministry at Cradley the society continued in a flourishing state. Soon after his settlement a new gallery was erected in the chapel, and in 1746 a charity school was established under his auspices. Fownes died at Shrewsbury in 1789, and was buried in the chancel of old S. Chad's Church.

The Rev. Noah Jones immediately succeeded Fownes at Cradley. He was born in 1725, "in the parish of Bettws, in Caermarthenshire," and early "placed under the care of the Rev. S. Jones, at Pentwyn in the parish of Llanver, who for 22 years taught a good grammar school of 40 boys." Here he remained five years, and in 1742, entered the "academy at Caermarthen, of which the Rev. Samuel Thomas was the principal and Mr. Evan Davies the assistant tutor." One of the first books which Mr. Thomas put into Mr. Jones' hands was Dr. Watts' Logic, which he "read with great pleasure twice over." This treatise together with Mr. Locke's Essay on the Understanding "taught him to think freely and put him upon the right scent in his enquiries after truth." At midsummer, 1745, he left the academy "to supply a small congregation at Newtown, in Montgomeryshire." Here he remained till midsummer, 1748, when he removed to Cradley. In 1750 he was ordained in Pensett Meeting-house "in the presence of above 700 people." Mr. Carpenter, of Worcester, preached a discourse on the ministerial office, Mr. Hancox, of Dudley, proposed the questions, Mr. Bourn, of Coseley, prayed, and Mr. Reynolds, of Bewdley, delivered the charge." The following copy of the certificate of Mr. Jones' ordination is of interest:—*Cradley, September 12th, 1750.— We, whose names are underwritten, Protestant Dissenting Ministers, having received full satisfaction with regard to the abilities and moral character of Mr. N. Jones, did, on the year and day above specified, proceed to oraain him as christian minister by prayer and imposition of hands, and we recommend him to the blessing of God, whereever he shall have opportunity of employing his labours.—S. Bourn, Jos Carpenter, J. Reynolds, Jas. Hancox, S. Phillips, J. Winter, Jos. Fownes, J. Jenkins, Job Orton.*

During Mr. Jones' ministry at Cradley, the society was more numerous than in any preceeding period, though it rather declined the last year, in consequence of the attempts of the Methodists to form a congregation in the neighbourhood. He was the first resident-minister, and in 1753 a convenient parsonage house, and a commodious building for the accommodation of two schools were erected. In September, 1762, Mr. Jones removed to Walsall, where he continued to labour until failing health compelled him to resign his pastoral care of that congregation, in 1784. He died 14th December, 1785, his funeral sermon being preached in the Old Meeting House, by Rev. S. Griffiths, from S. Matthew xxv., 21.

In 1762, the Rev. Joseph Baker (minister from 1750, at Beckington, Somerset), succeeded Mr. Jones as minister of the Pensett congregation. For some years he had "a numerous audience, but various circumstances contributed afterwards to diminish the number." The Methodists erected a place of worship in Cradley, in 1768. An "Episcopal Chapel was built at Brierley Hill, in 1767, and several families who resided in the parish of Kingswinford were threatened with expulsion from their farms and cottages if they continued to worship with the dissenters;" and in 1783, some who had embraced the opinions of the Countess of Huntingdon, formed a separate society in Cradley. On 14th June, 1789, Baker resigned his pulpit, and his congregation presented him with the sum of 25 guineas. He still continued to preach occasionally at Cradley, and to supply other societies in the neighbourhood; and died on

21st January, 1805, and was buried, according to his particular request, in the burial ground belonging to the Chapel in Park Lane, erected during the ministry of his successor, the Rev. James Scott.

GEO. EYRE EVANS.

(To be concluded next month.)

ADDENDUM.

No. IV. Coseley.—Old Meeting House.
Paul Russell.
Evan Owen Jones. 1804-1806.

The Wandering Child.

AN UNPUBLISHED PARABLE BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.*

In a solitary place among the groves a child wandered whithersoever he would.

He believed himself alone, and wist not that one watched him from the thicket, and that the eye of his parent was on him continually; neither did he mark whose hand had opened a way for him thus far.

All things that he saw were new to him; therefore he feared nothing.

He cast himself down in long grass, and as he lay, he sang till his voice of joy rang through the woods.

When he nestled among the flowers, a serpent arose from the midst of them; and when the child saw how its burnished coat glittered in the sun, like the rainbow, he stretched forth his hand to take it to his bosom.

Then the voice of his parent cried from the thicket, "Beware!"

And the child sprang up, and gazed about and around, to know whence the voice came; but when he saw not, he presently remembered it no more.

He watched how a butterfly burst from its shell, and flitted faster than he could pursue, and soon rose far above his reach.

When he gazed, and could trace its flight no more, his father put forth his hand, and pointed where the butterfly ascended, even into the clouds.

But the child saw not the sign.

A fountain gushed forth amidst the shadows of the trees, and its waters flowed into a deep and quiet pool.

The child kneeled on the brink, and looking in, he saw his own bright face, and it smiled upon him.

As he stooped yet nearer to meet it, a voice once more said "Beware!"

The child started back; but he saw that a gust ruffled the waters, and he said within himself, "It was but the voice of the breeze." And when the broken sunbeams glanced on the moving waves, he laughed, and dipped his foot, that the waters might again be ruffled: and the coolness was pleasant to him.

The voice was now louder, but he regarded it not, as the winds bore it away.

At length he saw somewhat glittering in the depths of the pool, and he plunged in to reach it.

As he sank, he cried aloud for help.

Ere the waters had closed over him, his father's hand was stretched out to save him.

And while he yet shivered with chilliness and fear, his parent said unto him:

"Mine eye was upon thee, and thou didst not heed; neither hast thou beheld my sign, nor hearkened to my voice. If thou hadst thought on me I had not been hidden."

Then the child cast himself on his father's bosom, and said:

"Be nigh unto me still, and mine eyes shall wait on thee, and mine ears shall be open unto thy voice for evermore."

"The impulse to confession almost always requires the presence of a fresh ear and a fresh heart; and in our moments of spiritual need, the man to whom we have no tie but our common nature, seems nearer to us than mother, brother, or friend. Our daily familiar life is but a hiding of ourselves from each other behind a screen of trivial words and deeds, and those who sit with us at the same hearth are often the farthest off from the deep human soul within us, full of unspoken evil and unacted good." GEO. ELIOTT.

*The late Harriet Martineau wrote half-a-dozen parables for an American Magazine which have never before appeared in this country.

A String of Seed-Pearls.

FROM "GUESSES AT TRUTH."

Truth, when witty, is the wittiest of all things.

Religion presents few difficulties to the humble, many to the proud, insuperable ones to the vain.

Many actions, like the Rhone, have two sources, one pure, the other impure.

A crumpled rose-leaf lay in my path. There was one little stain on it; but it was still very sweet. Why was it to be trampled under foot, or looked on as food for swine?

When you see an action in itself noble, to suspect the soundness of its motives, is like supposing everything high, mountains among the rest, to be hollow.

I could hardly feel much confidence in a man who had never been imposed upon.

Who wants to see a masquerade? might be written under a looking-glass.

Half the failures in life arise from pulling-in one's horse as he is leaping.

How much better the world would go on if people, now and then, would turn their backs upon themselves.

To no kind of begging are people so averse as to begging pardon; that is when there is any serious ground for doing so. When there is none, this phrase is as soon taken in vain as other momentous words are upon light occasions. On the other hand there is a kind of begging which everybody is forward enough at; and that is begging the question.

Children always turn towards the light. O, that grown-up people in the world would become like little children.

Purity is the feminine, Truth the masculine, of honour.

Friendship closes its eyes rather than see the moon eclipsed; while malice denies that it is ever at the full.

"Hell (a wise man has said) is paved with good intentions." Pluck up the stones, ye sluggards, and break the devil's head with them!

When will talkers refrain from evil-speaking? When listeners refrain from evil-hearing?

Charity begins at home. This is one of the sayings with which Selfishness tries to mask its own deformity. The charity which begins at home is pretty sure to end there. It has such ample work within doors, it flags and grows faint the moment it goes out of them.

The feeling is often the deeper truth, the opinion the more superficial one.

He must be a thorough fool who can learn nothing from his own folly.

Never put much confidence in such as put no confidence in others. A man prone to suspect evil is mostly looking in his neighbour for what he sees in himself.

To Adam Paradise was home. To the good among his descendants home is Paradise.

I was surprised just now to see a cobweb round a knocker; for it was *not* on the gate of heaven.

Many a man's vice has at first been nothing worse than good qualities run wild.

The only way of setting the Will free is to deliver it from wilfulness.

What are these teeth for, grandmamma? said little Red Ridinghood to the wolf. *What are these laws for?* might many a simple man ask of his rulers and governors. And in sundry instances, I am afraid, the wolf's answer would not be far from the truth.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

A Bird's-Eye View.

Quoth the boy, "I'll climb that tree
And bring down a nest I know."
Quoth the girl, "I will not see
Little birds defrauded so;
Cowardly their nests to take,
And their little hearts to break,
And their little eggs to steal:
Leave them happy for my sake—
Surely little birds can feel."

Quoth the boy, "My senses whirl;
Until now I never heard
Of the wisdom of a girl,
Or the feelings of a bird!
Pretty Mrs. Solomon,
Tell me what you reckon on
When you prate in such a strain;
If I wring their necks anon,
Certainly they *might* feel pain."

Quoth the girl, "I watch them talk,
Making love and making fun,
In the pretty ash-tree walk,
When my daily task is done.
In their little eyes I find
They are very fond and kind,
Every change of song or voice
Plainly proveth to my mind,
They can suffer and rejoice."

And the little Robin bird
(Nice brown back and crimson breast),
All the conversation heard,
Sitting trembling in his nest.
"What a world," he cried, "of bliss,
Full of birds and girls were this!
Blithe we'd answer to their call;
But a great mistake it is
Boys were ever made at all."

Children's Evening Hymn.

The little birds now seek their rest;
The baby sleeps on mother's breast;
Thou givest all Thy children rest,
God of the weary.

The sailor prayeth on the sea;
The little ones at mother's knee;
Now comes the penitent to Thee,
God of the weary.

The orphan puts away his fears;
The troubled hopes for happier years;
Thou driest all the mourner's tears,
God of the weary.

Thou sendest rest to tiréd feet,
To little toilers slumbers sweet,
To aching hearts repose complete,
God of the weary.

In grief, perplexity, or pain,
None ever come to Thee in vain;
Thou makest life a joy again,
God of the weary.

We sleep that we may wake renewed,
To serve Thee as Thy children should,
With love, and zeal, and gratitude,
God of the weary.

The Linnet.

O sneaking cat you love the fire,
You lick your paws and seek your own;
You cannot wonder or admire—
The life you lead is yours alone.

Look in the dog's delightful eyes,
Behold him wag his loyal tail;
The noble creature, frank and wise—
True friend in need that will not fail.

I could not be a cat—I feel
I never *can* have been a cat;
From room to room I could not steal
So sly—I was not made for that.

The linnet in her golden cage
Has seen a cat and hides her face;
But feels convinced that history's page
Will give that cat its proper place.

For let us lead the lives we can,
Or only lead the lives we will,
The future, with its stronger plan
Will paint us in true colours still.

The cats *as* cats will make a noise,
Linnets *as* linnets will appear,
And girls *as* girls, and boys *as* boys—
Need I say more to wisdom's ear?

The Magic of Music.

Lighter and sweeter
Let your song be;
And for sorrow—oh, cheat her
With melody!

News from the Field.

MIDLAND CHRISTIAN UNION.—We beg to call the attention of our friends to the advertisement of the annual services and meetings of our local Missionary and Church-Aid Society. A general exchange of pulpits will be made by the ministers of our district on Sunday, March 11, when collections will be made on behalf of the M. C. U. On Monday, March 12, a series of meetings will be held at the Old Meeting Church, Birmingham. The assembly will meet at 12 o'clock for the transaction of business. Luncheon will be provided at the Colonnade Hotel at 2 o'clock. At 3-30, a conference will be held at the Old Meeting School-room, to be opened by the Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A.; tea at 6 o'clock. The annual sermon will be preached by the Rev. W. E. Addis, M.A., of Nottingham. Service to begin at 7-30. Tickets for the luncheon will be sent to all ministers and delegates. Other friends can purchase tickets at 2s. No tickets are required for tea.

BANBURY.—On January 30 and 31 the Annual New Year's Parties were held in connection with the Sunday School. On the 30th the scholars went through an excellent programme of recitations, dialogues, and songs in a very creditable manner. The Rev. H. Hill (pastor) presided, and at the conclusion of the programme gifts of clothing and other useful articles were given to the scholars by Mr. and Mrs. Hill. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Cobb, of Lewes, again sent a handsome parcel of good and warm clothing for the children's parties, and several members of the congregation and other friends kindly contributed articles of clothing, and sums of money to defray the expenses of the treats. Three hearty cheers were given for Mr. and Mrs. Cobb, the donor of so many kind gifts to the scholars. On the 31st the scholars had their annual tea, followed by games in the school-room, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Parents, members of the congregation, and teachers were also present. There was an excellent attendance each evening.

WHITCHURCH: CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR.—The annual report speaks in encouraging terms of the work of the church and schools in 1893. The congregations and offertories have been larger than in any previous year. A fund for building a manse has been started. The Band of Hope and Dorcas Society continue to flourish. The Men's Club has now 143 members on the roll.

LYE.—The first two of a course of doctrinal Sunday evening lectures have been delivered here. The first was delivered on February 4, by the Rev. A. E. O'Connor, of Cradley, his subject being "What must I do to be Saved?" On February 11, the Rev. John Harr son, of West Bromwich, took for his subject, "The Christ that is to be." The chapel was crowded on both occasions. The annual meeting of the congregation was held on Monday, February 5th, the chair being occupied by F. Percival Evers, Esq. Selections of music were given during the evening, and addresses were delivered by the Rev. A. E. O'Connor and by Rev. I. Wrigley, minister of the church.

WEST BROMWICH: LODGE ROAD CHAPEL.—On Monday evening, February 12th, the annual congregational party was held in the Schools, and was followed by a meeting, presided over by Mr. A. Caddick, in the chapel. There was a large attendance, among those present being the Revs. J. Wood and J. C. Street (Birmingham), A. E. O'Connor, H. Eachus, and J. Harrison (pastor). The Chairman alluded to the loss which the cause of liberal Christianity had experienced during the year by the death of the Rev Dr. Crosskey, and to the lively interest which the Doctor always took in that cause at West Bromwich. He also made mention of the offers which their own minister (Mr. Harrison) had received during the year to go elsewhere, remarking that, personally, he believed in continuity of service when thoroughly good work was being done, and he hoped Mr. Harrison might be with them for years to come — (applause). — The Rev. J. Harrison regretted the unavoidable absence of the Treasurer (Mr. F. T. Jefferson) and the Chairman of the Vestry Committee (Mr. S. Greenway), and proceeded to review the progress of the work from the time the services were established in St. George's Hall in 1874. While they might sometimes regret the smallness of the numerical success, he said it was something to have maintained the work during this period, and to be able to have so well attended a meeting as they had that night. The Members of that Church, he remarked, were always ready to take part in the educational and philanthropic work of the town, and whenever there had been a call for the maintenance of the principles of civil and religious liberty, the response from Lodge Road had been hearty and loyal. As to the offers which had been made to him to undertake work elsewhere, he said until the time came when he felt it his duty to leave them he hoped to be able to give them his best services--(applause).--The Rev. J. Wood congratulated them upon keeping Mr. Harrison in their midst, notwithstanding the offers he had received, and expressed his satisfaction to hear that the institutions of the church were in a comparatively prosperous condition. He spoke at some length upon the need of enthusiasm in connection with their work, and urged the importance of regular attendance at the services. A great many people, he was aware, said that the services of the church did not now stand for what they used to do, and they criticised the preacher and the pulpit, and declared that they could read books which contained better and newer thoughts than they heard in the pulpit. While he thanked God that they had their press and their cheap literature, he did not for one moment believe that the press was ever going to take the place of the pulpit—(applause). They all knew the difference between reading in cold print a sermon and having it from the lips of the minister himself. The living man and beating heart would always have a place in the history of religion—(applause). — The Rev. J. C. Street referred to the recent great religious congress in Chicago, and mentioning two volumes containing the proceedings of that wonderful congress, said there was no book in all the world that would in any way compare with it, for it told the story of the brotherhood of humanity and the sonship of God—(applause).